

ON THE GENERIC NAME OESTERGRENIA¹

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(Received August 12, 1936)

Heding in 1931 (pp. 668-9), after remarking the presence of two distinct groups in the genus *Labidoplax*, proposed a new name *Oestergrenia* as of a subgenus. This subgenus is represented by the genotype *digitata*, and is characterized by bilaterally symmetrical form of the calcareous ring and the presence of numerous ciliated funnels. In his subsequent paper, Heding (1932, p. 355) raised the name *Oestergrenia* to the rank of a genus, although he gives no explanation for it.

As was indeed referred to by Heding, this division of two groups in the genus *Labidoplax* had been mentioned already by Östergren (1898, p. 116). Östergren gave the branching modes of tentacles and the structures of the anchor-plate as distinguishing characters of the two groups, and placed the species *tenera* (= *buskii*) in the group A, and the remaining four species then known, namely *digitata*, *dubia*, *incerta* and *thomsonii*, in the group B. When later (1905, p. CLVII-CLIX) the same author described a new species *media*, which in his opinion was to be added in his group A, he had to leave the structures of the anchor-plate as the only distinguishing character of the two groups. He then concluded: "auch dieser Unterschied ist in systematischer Hinsicht kaum von grosser Bedeutung." According to Heding (1931, p. 668), however, Östergren still later resumed the opinion to the effect, that the two groups should represent two distinct genera, and the first group will keep the name *Labidoplax*, while the second will take another name. It was this latter one that Heding called by the name *Oestergrenia*.

The question was taken up by Becher repeatedly. In 1910 (p. 356) he expressed the opinion that the first group of Östergren with *buskii* and *media* should be separated from the genus *Labidoplax*, and either be placed under *Leptosynapta* or may constitute a new genus, perhaps together with *minuta*. The remainder may either be left in the genus

¹ Contributions from the Zoological Laboratory, Kyushu Imperial University, No. 89.

Labidoplax of a narrowed sense, or be united with *Protankyra*. Further, the same author (1912, pp. 319, 321) discussed the problem, and said that it was doubtful if the anchor-plates of these two groups had really been derived from a common origin, and referred to the presence or absence of the sensory buds and muscular stomach as other distinguishing characters of the groups. Although some more materials were needed for him to decide the matter, he concluded with the following words: "So scheint mir auch jetzt noch die Trennung der leicht zu unterscheidenden Arten-Gruppen in zwei Gattungen das beste."

It is very unfortunate that Heding, in selecting a name for his new genus, should have overlooked the fact that nearly 20 years ago Mitsukuri (1912, p. 33, footnote) had stamped the generic name *Östergrenia* for the holothurian of a remote group. Mitsukuri regarded the presence in *Bathyplores moseleyi* of numerous pedicels along the odd ventral ambulacrum as a characteristic desirable enough to keep the species apart from all the other species of the genus *Bathyplores*.

The validity of this genus of Mitsukuri was then criticized by Ohshima (1915, p. 224), who preferred to follow Östergren's original diagnosis of the genus *Bathyplores* which could cover *moseleyi* as well as *fallax*. Ekman (1925, pp. 20-21) discussed very carefully the characters distinguishing the two genera *Bathyplores* and *Synallactes*, and remarked that the presence or absence of pedicels on the odd ambulacrum in *Bathyplores* could not be relied upon as a diagnostic character. Further he refers to the observation of Mortensen (1924, p. 220) on *B. natans* in which the latter author found "the mid-ventral radius usually entirely naked, but sometimes a few scattered tube-feet occur there, and sometimes they are as numerous as, or even more numerous than, in the lateral ambulacra."²

Thus the genus distinguished by Mitsukuri can no more be accepted as valid. On the other hand the name proposed by Heding must also be withdrawn because it was preoccupied.

A close comparative study of the characters of the species belonging to *Labidoplax*, based on the descriptions by Östergren, Becher, Heding and others, I have come to the conclusion in support of Heding's view that the group B of Östergren should be treated as a distinct genus. I may here propose the name *Becheria*, in memory of

² These lines are borrowed from a later work of the same author (1927, pp. 384-5).

the late Prof. Siegfried Becher of Rostock, to substitute the name *Oestergrenia*.³

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³ I was especially cautious in investigating if the name *Becheria* had ever been preoccupied by any previous worker. I am much indebted to my colleague Prof. Teiso Esaki for his kind and valuable assistance rendered me in this regard.